

Inspection of a good school: Sacred Heart Primary School

Langford Drive, Stopsley, Luton, Bedfordshire LU2 9AJ

Inspection dates:

31 October – 1 November 2019

Outcome

Sacred Heart Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really enjoy coming to Sacred Heart Primary School. Teachers make sure that learning is interesting and fun. Pupils are proud of their school. They appreciate their teachers' hard work and commitment. They are happy and say that their teachers take very good care of them. The school is safe and secure. Pupils attend regularly.

Staff work well together as a team and have the pupils' best interests at heart. They set high standards right from the early years upwards, and expect pupils to meet them. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are kind to one another. Bullying does not happen often and when it does, teachers deal with it quickly and effectively.

The school promotes its values through its Catholic ethos. Pupils model these values through acts of kindness, by listening to other pupils' views and by accepting people's differences. Teachers encourage pupils to be inquisitive learners. Parents, staff and pupils have positive views about the school.

Children in the early years settle in swiftly and quickly develop their reading skills. Teachers rightly give reading a very high priority. Children mix well with one another and the school prepares them well for Year 1.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and how they will learn. In science, for example teachers plan lessons so that pupils develop their understanding of the subject. They repeat topics year after year, but also make sure that pupils learn a little more about the topic each time. Pupils remember what they have learned in previous years. They understand that what they are learning now is helping them to make progress. Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils like the school's approach to teaching mathematics using a commercially produced text-book. They enjoy working their way through each section. Not all teachers of mathematics think carefully about why they teach the topics in the

order that they do.

Leaders make sure that children in the early years begin to read as soon as they start school. Teachers are well trained in teaching reading. They quickly identify any children who start to fall behind. These children receive extra help in groups or a one-to-one basis. Some children make rapid improvements because of this but are not always moved up immediately to the next group. Pupils read with great confidence and in Year 2 achieve much better than most other schools do in national tests. Last year, pupils in Year 6 did not achieve as well as they usually do in reading. Leaders and governors believe this was due to pupils not finishing the test paper and also to their weaker comprehension skills. Leaders have already identified ways to stop this happening again.

Pupils experience a range of exciting activities outside the classroom. They become members of the school council, the anti-bullying club (ABC) and faith ambassadors. They attend multi-faith story telling sessions, Shakespeare workshops and sessions on financial awareness led by a national bank. Year 6 pupils have the chance to experience what it was like to be a child who was evacuated during the Second World War. The school encourages pupils to make a positive contribution to the local community. Pupils visit the neighbouring special school, take part on the Luton Peace Walk and sing Christmas carols at Luton Airport.

Behaviour in lessons is good. Teachers make the most of pupils' positive attitudes and plan lessons which are exciting and fun for everyone. Pupils support one another if a classmate struggles to give the correct answer. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities achieve well due to the support of the additional adults. Leaders make good use of the extra money (the Pupil Premium) they get for disadvantaged pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Bullying is a rare event and pupils who are ABC members are determined that it stays that way.

Leaders and governors know what the school does well and what it could do better. They have thought carefully about the subjects that are taught and how they can prepare pupils to move on to their secondary school. They have high expectations of their staff, but also consider teachers' workload. A good example of this is the introduction of teachers giving pupils more verbal feedback, and not requiring them to mark every piece of work that pupils produce.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Checks on the suitability of staff who work at the school are thorough. Staff receive regular training in the things they need to know in order to keep children safe. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. The school has a good relationship with the local police community service officer (PCSO). Leaders invite her and external organisations to speak to staff and pupils. The school makes effective use of its family support workers.

Procedures to raise concerns about pupils are clear and staff make effective use of these. Pupils who attend alternative provision are checked on closely and regularly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects have produced their own curriculum plans and schemes of learning. Other subjects use commercially produced materials. The subject leaders who have produced their own plans have given careful consideration to how these are structured. Other subjects, such as mathematics, have given less thought to this aspect. The school should ensure that these subject leaders and the teachers explore the reasons why the curriculum is structured in the way that it is, even if it secures positive outcomes.
- Pupils' attainment in the combined measure for reading, writing and in mathematics uncharacteristically dipped in Year 6 in 2019. This was due to pupils underperforming in the reading test. Leaders need to ensure that pupils' stamina is strengthened and that they develop better reading comprehension skills to avoid a repetition of the previous year's results.
- Some children who receive additional support for their reading make good progress due to the impact of these interventions. The school has set times in the year when they review the ability groups children are taught in. Leaders need to review children's reading abilities on an ongoing basis and move them to a different group immediately if it is appropriate to do so.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged Sacred Heart Primary School to be good on 23 February 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	109640
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10110280
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Byrne
Headteacher	Joan Cullen
Website	www.sacredheartluton.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2016

Information about this school

- Sacred Heart Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school and is based in Stopsley, on the outskirts of Luton.
- The school admits pupils mostly from the Roman Catholic faith and is promoted by the Diocese of Northampton.
- Some pupils attend The Lighthouse Provision, which is based at Wenlock Junior School, Beaconsfield Road, Luton LU2 0RW.
- The number of pupils eligible for pupil premium is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I also met with pupils and spoke to parents at the end of school.
- I looked in detail at three subjects – reading, mathematics and science. I visited lessons in these subjects with senior leaders. I also met with teachers, curriculum leaders and pupils, and looked at a sample of pupils' work in these subjects.

- I looked at a range of school documentation, including information on behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body and school policies.
- To inspect safeguarding I looked at the school's systems for appointing new members of staff and met with the person who has responsibility for safeguarding children in the school as well as the two family support workers. I also looked at how well the school records concerns it has about pupils who are at risk and the actions it takes to minimise these risks.
- I considered 39 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 20 free-text responses. I also considered 35 responses to the staff survey and 44 responses from pupils.

Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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